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The aim of this research is to reveal the problems that are encountered when writing culture bound words from the Ndebele language to English language. This is done with special focus on the book Traditional Ceremonies of AmaNdebele (2001) by Pathisa Nyathi. The problems he encountered are highlighted and the strategies he took to overcome those problems are discussed. This research discussed elements that qualify cross cultural translation as a special translation that is different from other forms of translations. The findings of this research reveal that borrowing is often used when a translator is faced with the problems of untranslatability, however there are some other strategies like adaptation, transliteration and transportation that can be used.

Key words: Translation strategies, culture, tradition, untranslatability, translation procedures.

INTRODUCTION

Culture and tradition are part of every society. They define a society and make them who they are. If they are improperly handled or followed they are likely to result in problems within a society, problems like divisions, finger pointing and even the collapse of a society as a whole. Terms like culture, tradition, society and translation need to be fully understood for the sake of this research because it revolves around them. These were the main focus-areas of Nyathi [1] in publishing the book ‘Traditional Ceremonies Of AmaNdebele’, he wanted to show a clear picture of who these Ndebele people are; their religion, culture, tradition and their philosophy of life; hence the need to understand those terms.

Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviours, objects and other characters common to the member of a particular society or group. Through culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society’s shared values and contribute to society at large. Thus, culture includes many societal aspects; language, customs, values, norm, tools, products and institutions. Edward Tyler cited in Glassie [2 p350] is widely credited with the first modern definition of culture that it is “a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customs an any other capabilities and habits acquired by man and society”. In his book Traditional Ceremonies of AmaNdebele, Nyathi [1] translates all the above elements of the Ndebele culture into the English language. Tradition refers to the handling down of customs or beliefs from generation to generation Glassie [2 p354] asserts that tradition begins with the personal habits and intact tradition is not so much a matter of preservation, as it is a matter of recreation by successive persons generations. With this view in mind Nyathi saw the great need of passing the knowledge on traditional ceremonies of amaNdebele to the next generations and thought of documenting the knowledge. A society is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations, and having shared customs, laws and organisations. Nyathi [1] is concerned with the Ndebele society that he writes about and wishes to preserve their culture. There is a proper way by which traditional values and ceremonies are supposed to be handled and followed, they should be handled with respect and followed promptly because they involve matters that build a society and shape its people and their lives. Proper handling of
traditional values and ceremonies gives good impacts to a society; it means they can live in harmony with their ancestors who are responsible for their day to day activities and their prosperity in general. Translation therefore, is the interpretation of traditional values and ceremonies.

The aim of this research is to explore the problems that are encountered when writing issues that are related to the Ndebele culture using the English language because the researcher has realised that the English language is used as a medium of instruction in the educational system and there is a worry on how cultural issues can be handled when they are to be taught in English. For this to be done, the book Traditional Ceremonies of AmaNdebele (2001) by Phathisa Nyathi will be used. This research will also explore the methods and tactics that Nyathi used to overcome the problems that are encountered when translating culturally bound terms from Ndebele to English. This research falls under the discipline of African Philosophy in conjunction with translation studies. Traditionally, traditional and cultural wisdom were passed on from generation to generation verbally and through practice. However, because of globalisation there has been a lot of cultural contact with diverse cultural communities which has resulted in cultural dilution. In the face of this external intervention, traditional ceremonies and cultural aspects can thus be well preserved in written documents and kept in libraries. In this research the English language was used as a mediating language for the depiction of the traditional ceremonies of the Ndebele people for the benefit and consumption of other cultural communities.

This is a descriptive research. According to Christensen et al. [3 p238], descriptive research “is a design where the researcher investigates the effects of one independent variable.” In this research, no experiments were carried out and only the relationship between source language and target language were examined. In the field of translation, a source language (SL) is the language from which a translation is being done, where as a target language (TL) is the language into which a translation is being done. The target language is dependent on the source language, what is said in the target language is a result of what has been said in the source language. An independent variable is defined by Chisi et al. [4] as “the variable you have control over, what you can choose and manipulate. It is usually what you think will affect the dependant variable. In this research, the source language is Ndebele, it is the one that affects the outcome of the translation process, it stands and controls the situation at hand.

Objectives

This research aims to:

- highlight the problems that Nyathi encountered when translating terms concerning Ndebele tradition and ceremonies from Ndebele to English
- assess the translation techniques that Nyathi employed to translate culture-bound words from Ndebele to English
- provide solutions to problems encountered when translating culture-bound words

Justification

Globalisation is generally taken to refer to the attempt to make the world a global village. Some cultures like the Ndebele culture have not stood immune to this problem, they have been affected negatively as today’s youth seem to choose English language and its culture because of the prestige associated with the language and the national language status that it is accorded in Zimbabwe. Although the 2013 Zimbabwe Constitution Amendment No. 20, places Ndebele at par with English as an official language, Zimbabwe has an unwritten diglossia situation where English is generally consider to be a higher code as compared to Ndebele. There is therefore a great need to conserve the Ndebele culture for the benefit of posterity. The best way of doing this is to document it. Relying on the old generation to preserve the culture is unreliable because they shall soon pass on and leave the world with their treasured knowledge on traditional culture and ceremonies. This work is valuable because it will discuss the importance of culture, how to handle cultural norms and the ways of writing about them from Ndebele to English.

This research seeks to equip the nation with complete knowledge on translating terms that are culture bound. The effect of writing cultural words in another target language which is English will also be examined. This research explores ways of translating cultural terms from Ndebele to English with a positive attitude of educating those who are not aware of the traditional customs and ceremonies of the Ndebele people. It will, thus enhance the Ndebele culture making it accessible by people from other societies in the world, who may be interested in understanding the Ndebele people. The research will also equip the general public on methods that can be employed to overcome problems encountered when translating culture-bound terms from Ndebele to English. The choice of the book ‘Traditional Ceremonies of AmaNdebele’ is a worthy one because the author Phathisa Nyathi is a popular Ndebele writer and historian. As a traditional or cultural preservationist, he has also published another book ‘Material Culture of AmaNdebele’ in addition to the book under study. His argument in writing in Ndebele is that it enables constant development of the language to achieve a rich cultural heritage for future generations.

Phathisa Nyathi has made tremendous efforts to document the Ndebele culture and this research examines whether he has been successful or not in putting across the knowledge on the Ndebele culture to
those who practise it and to those who are outside it. After showing the translation procedures that were employed by Nyathi [1], they will be ready for adaptation by those who wish to pursue the study of translation. Cultural untranslatability is the greatest translator’s nightmare. This research therefore seeks to explore and expose the available options that translators may resort to when faced with the problem of cultural untranslatability. This will also assist other Ndebele writers who may want to write more works on the Ndebele culture with a view of documenting and preserving. Some aspects of the Ndebele traditions are fast dying away, not because they are no longer relevant to the contemporary society, but because they are not documented somewhere, where people may refer to whenever they want to practice them.

Review of Related Literature

Dhlamini [5] discusses translation in court proceedings with special emphasis on loss and gain from source language to target language. She highlights the shortage in the lexicon from the source language which results in word borrowing or a creation of new words altogether. However, unlike this research, she does not look at words that are related to the Ndebele culture and ceremonies. The discovery made by Dhlamini [5] helps this research in that it revealed that there is a possibility of a change to take place in meaning whenever there is a translation process taking place. Ruwende [6] researches on translating national radio news from Shona to Ndebele. He highlights that there is a change in meaning when doing that. This research will examine how words pertaining to cultural norms and ceremonies are translated from Ndebele to English. The research by Ruwende [6] helped this research in identifying the most problematic areas when translating from Ndebele to another language; his research was focusing on the Ndebele and Shona languages. Hence this research brings in the English language dimension. Ruwende’s research is helpful because his investigation takes place in the Zimbabwean context just like this research.

Bassnet [7] explains various translation theories, problems encountered in translation, word loss and gain and solutions to problems encountered. However, her researches were just general without being language-specific, as will be done in this research. None-the-less, her findings are helpful and were used in this investigation. Robinson [8] talks of cultural translation. This field of translation studies derives mostly from the logic to denote the process of transformation, linguistic or otherwise, in a given culture. The concept uses linguistic translation as a tool in analysing the nature of transformation and interchange in cultures. These observations are vital in this research because they emphasise an important link between culture and translation which is what Nyathi [1] focused on.

Theoretical Framework

Some professional translators take considerable pride in denying that they have any theory of translation, they claim to just translate. In reality, however, all persons engaged in the complex task of translating possess some type of underlying theory though it may be embryonic. The basic reason for this lack of adequate theoretical treatments is that translation is essentially a discipline which is dependent upon a number of disciplines which include linguistics, cultural anthropology, and psychology and communication theory. Kussmaul [9 p165] explains that there are basically two competing theories of translation that can be used in the translation process. In one, the predominant purpose is to express as exactly as possible the full force and meaning of every word and phrases in the original context, this is also known as word-for-word or literal translation or direct translation. Here the translator translates each word or phrase as he understands it without taking grammar into consideration, the words are translated as they come in sequence in the source language and each word is replaced by a new one from the target language as they come in the sentence.

On the other hand, the predominant purpose of translation is to produce a result that does not read like a translation at all but that moves in its new dress with the same ease as its native rendering [10]. It is also referred to as the sense-for-sense translation. The meaning of each whole sentence is translated before moving on to the next, it is concerned with translating the sense of the text, what it is all about and nothing else. It is important to translate the content from the reader’s point of view but it should always be kept in mind that the actual meaning of the original text should never be played with. If it is done, the meaning and the flow of the sentences should always be maintained and that too is done in an artistic way.

This investigation focuses on the Skopos theory of translation which was established by the German linguist Haps Vermeer and comprises the idea that translation should primarily take into account the function of both source and target text. To translate means to produce a text in a target setting for a target purpose and target addresses in target circumstances. In the Skopos theory, the status of the source text is lower than it is in equivalence based theory of translation. The source is an offer of information which the translator turns into an offer of information for the target audience. According to Kassmaul [9 p166] the functional approach has a great affinity with Skopos theory. The function of a translation is dependent on the knowledge, expectations, values and norms of the target readers who are again influenced by the situation they are in and by their culture”. This position is going to be used throughout this investigation where the source language is Ndebele and anything possible will be done to offer knowledge in the target language which is English. The source language offers the base upon which the target language builds on,
everything at all costs will be done to make sure that information on the traditional ceremonies of AmaNdebele reaches the target audience who are either non-Ndebele speakers or Ndebele speakers who have lost track of their traditional ceremonies.

**METHODOLOGY**

The whole research is based on desk research and participatory observation. This is due to the fact that the researchers are mother tongue speakers of isiNdebele and are resident within the same community in which the research is being carried out. Desk research was also considered appropriate because the whole research focuses on the book ‘Traditional Ceremonies of AmaNdebele’ and the translation theory. The observation was structured and limited only to the problems that Nyathi [1] encountered while translating culturally bound words from Ndebele to English and also what he did to overcome the problems he met.

An interview with Mr Pathisa Nyathi who is the author of the book was conducted to enquire about what inspired him to write the book and who his main target audience was. This was done so as to understand the techniques he used, the problems of untranslatability he encountered and how he solved them. An interview is where by a researcher asks the informants questions one-on-one or face to face. Interviews have previously and continue to be used by scholars and non-scholars as a reliable tool in information gathering. Chisi [4 p57] contends that “interviews are a tried and tested method of gathering evidence and information obtained from interviews is usually first hand though subjective”. There are basically three types of research interviews; structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. The semi structured interview format was used so that it allows the interviewer to probe the interviewee by developing questions as the discussion progresses. Semi structured interviews are those in which the researcher prepares a few questions that will get the interview process going. Most of the questions that follow will be generated from how the interviewee has responded to the previous question. They are more informal and conversational. They help relax the situation and allow the interviewee to be free and be able to express themselves naturally. This is unlike the structured formal interviews which may be a bit intimidating to the informants. The flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the researchers.

**Definition of Translation**

This section explains what translation is in general without basing on the text by Nyathi [1]. The translation process is explained, problems associated with translation are highlighted and the relationship between culture and translation is explored. This section attempts to equip the translator with knowledge pertaining to translation in general and also add more knowledge on ways that can be used when translating culture bound words from one language to another. Translation is basically taken to mean the transference of meaning from text to text (written or recorded) with the translator having time and access to resources to produce an accurate document or verbal artefact. From this viewpoint it becomes clear that the researcher has ample time to consult resources and work over his work to produce a well-recognised document. Cobley [11 p27] defines translation as “a process where one sign entity is considered as equivalent to another which it replaces in a given context”. What Cobley explains here is that in the translation process there should be equivalence in meaning in what has been said in the source language to what has been said in the target language.

The translation process is also explained as a process that should serve a purpose, or in other ways achieve a goal. If the translation process does not achieve a goal then it is considered unsuccessful. The primary goal of translation is to convey a message from the source language to the target language in the exact meaning as it’s original or as closest as possible to source text. It is not merely an inter-linguistic process where only the language aspect of the source and target language is concerned but it is more complex than replacing source language text with target language text. It includes cultural and educational aspects that can shape the options and attitudes of recipients. Readers of the target text can be influenced by what they read and they can react to it whether negatively or positively therefore the process of translation should be handled with caution because some group of people may find offence if their language is not handled well.

Translation can also be taken as a communicative strategy that bridges the gap between two languages and their cultures so that there is understanding between them. Duff [12 p5] explains the same idea when he says that translation “is the process of conveying message across linguistic and cultural barriers”. What Duff explains is that translation is a communicative process; it brings across a message in a language which also carries with it cultural aspects linked to that language. What this means is that it is possible to translate cultural aspects of one language into another language so that there can be communication and understanding between those two languages. Hewson and Martin [13 p22] explain translation as “evidently concerned with cross cultural communication”. What is implied by this is that translating a text from one language to another facilitates for two different languages to understand each other’s cultures and thus promoting a good relationship between the speakers of those languages because there will be an understanding between them. What needs to be
emphasised is that translations are never produced in a cultural or political vacuum and cannot be isolated from the context in which the texts are embedded. Translation is therefore undoubtedly a communicative process that bridges the gap between two different languages yet conveying a message from one language to another so that there can be understanding between the source language and the target language.

The Translation Process

The key players in the translation process are source language and target language which is sometimes referred to as the receptor language. Between the source language and the target language there are a lot of activities that takes place to make the translation process a success. Bassnet [7 p16] presents the following translation model that he adopted from Eugene Nida:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE LANGUAGE</th>
<th>RECIPIENT LANGUAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEXT TRANSLATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS TRANSFER</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECONSTRUCTION</td>
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What the model explains is that there is a long journey between the source language and the target language in translation. The text has to be analysed first, its language culture, message content, sentence structure and linguistic elements of the source text have to be analysed as a first step into translation. When that has been done then the next step is to reconstruct what has been communicated in the source text into the target language using the expertise possessed by the translator. The most important skill in his possession is being bilingual, that is, knowing two different languages. In reconstruction the translator finds proper words to use when replacing those in the source language but still maintaining the original meaning. The information is then transferred into the target language and thus the translation process will be completed. Nida’s model forms the basis of translation. Translation is considered as consisting of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style. The explanation on the closest natural equivalent can infer that cultural consideration is paramount as well in the translation process because language and culture are inseparable because that is what binds a society, that is, communicating and having common values, beliefs, behaviours, and norms that regulate the day to day activities.

The Translator

The translator comes at the centre of the translation process. Katan [14 p16] asserts that “the translator is a bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different communities”. By this Katan means that the translator knows more than one language (bilingual) and stands in between those who only know one language (monolingual) and wish to get information from the other language that they do not know and by so doing the translator breaks the barrier between two different language communities. Therefore translators not only have to be intermediaries between different language systems but also have to be intercultural mediators because language and culture are inter twinned and thus translators have to be bilingual and bicultural. The translator works with the written word meaningfully reassembling the fragments of communication from the source language to the target language. The translator provides their own view of the original text by using the knowledge on translation that they will have acquired. It is important to see the translation as more than a simple operation of swapping one word for another into the target language. The finished article needs to be meaningful to the reader. Therefore the translator’s expertise and skills are vital.

The main job of the translator is to provide an effective means of communication. Communication is defined by de Valenzuela [15 p2] as any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person’s needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge or affective states. It requires a sender, a message and a recipient. It has three key players in its game just like the translation process. Just like the translation process, there are other factors that come into play to make communication a success. The following are simplified illustrations to compare the communication and translation processes:

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>SENDER</th>
<th>MESSAGE</th>
<th>RECIPIENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE LANGUAGE</td>
<td>TRANSLATOR</td>
<td>TARGET LANGUAGE</td>
</tr>
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Efficient communication is not only to translate an original text by word-for-word basis; it is delivering the genuine context of the message to the language that the target person understands. A single mistake in context translation can result in offensive or wrong messages that can eventually lead into misunderstandings between people. The translator cannot merely search for equivalent words in the target language to render the meaning of the source. Translation can be seen as an act of mediation between the periphery and centre, the dominant and aspiring cultures. Without translators, culture promotion will never exist; cultures will remain unshared and uncultivated. The translator should have sufficient knowledge about both the source and target languages. Bassnet [7 p22] explains that “the translator, has the responsibilities of finding a solution to the most daunting problems, the functional view must be adopted
with regard not only to meaning but also to style and form. This goes on to elaborate on the expertise that the translator should possess, this expertise will help him to find solutions to the problems that he encounters during the translation process. The translator is expected to have a creative role which often involves creating a new vocabulary in order to successfully convey the message of the source text.

The translator should also admit and consider the possibility of untranslatability, because the two languages are not related, they cannot possibly have an exact fitting translation at times. However, Hocket [16 p.14] warns that “an easy word by word translation is inevitably misleading” therefore it should be avoided at all costs. There are some instances where the translator can experience cases of untranslatability. This can be a property of a text, or of an utterance, in one language for which no equivalent text or utterance can be found in another language when translated. A translator can however resort to a number of translation procedures to compensate for this challenge. Duff [12 p.11] points out that “idiomatic expressions are notoriously untranslatable”, however, other than idiomatic expressions, there are other words and expressions that are untranslatable as shall be discussed in the next section. The translator’s background knowledge is essential in helping the translation process. This investigation will examine the background knowledge that Nyathi [1] had concerning the Ndebele culture and tradition, how he managed to translate culture bound words into English and whether he was able to satisfactorily translate the Ndebele cultural aspects into English or not.

Culture and Tradition

Language is an expression of culture and the individuality of its speakers. It influences the way the speakers perceive the world. If language influences thought and culture, it means then that ultimate translation is impossible. The possibility of having ultimate translation depends on the purpose and how deep the source text is embedded in the culture. The deeper the text is embedded on culture, the more difficult it is to translate. This observation by Hariyanto [17] lays the foundation for the problems that Nyathi [1] encountered in his work because the text is concerned with cultural aspects. Hariyanto [17] goes on to explain that in practice it is suggested that a translator should take into account the purpose of the translation the culturally bound words or expressions. Because of this, culturally bound words and expressions should be treated and handled with some kind of caution as was done by Nyathi [1]. Translators have a major task before them. They are expected to do a cross-cultural translation where cultural words, proverbs and idiomatic expressions whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely culture concerned should be well treated. Nida [18] argues that the meaning of culturally marked words is often difficult to grasp without some cultural knowledge and because of this Nyathi [1] employs a number of procedures to make his work a success, he does not rely on only one strategy to overcome the problems of untranslatability but uses several methods as shall be revealed in the next section.

The Problems that Nyathi (2001) Encountered when Translating Ndebele Cultural and Traditional Terms into English

One of the objectives of this research is to highlight the problems that Nyathi [1] faced when translating terms concerning the Ndebele tradition from Ndebele to the English language. The research established that a lot of challenges were discovered in his work. The major reason being that Ndebele and English are two different languages with different cultures, customs and traditions altogether. It also happens that some cultural aspects that take place in one language society do not take place in the other. This being the case, there is bound to be problems when translating cultural terms from Ndebele to English.

Nyathi [1] often fails to get an English equivalent word for some Ndebele terms. For the translation process to be successful, the translator should search for words in the target language to render the meaning of the source language and for Nyathi to achieve his set objectives, he applies various translation procedures to put his message across. Upon failing to get some English words to replace a Ndebele word, Nyathi throws in the Ndebele word in the middle of an English sentence and hence his work never turns out to be in English throughout as was his primary aim, the book cannot be hundred percent be said to be an English text. Such sentences containing Ndebele words could be seen on the pages mentioned below:

Page 57 – Traditional Ndebele women prided themselves as having mekezad
Page 62 - The men givad and followed the prince
Page 63 - Mathanjana sprinkled, chela’d the prince
Page 105 - The skin is a handicap, it must be severed. It must be cut then thungwad.

The underlined words do not exist as they are neither in Ndebele or English. Asked as to how he came up with such words, Nyathi said he did some form of transliteration, which, in this case proved to be the best translation strategy to adopt. He insisted that this was the only way that could best represent what these words meant in their language. The other challenge that Nyathi experienced was as a result of the fact that the Ndebele and English cultures are different and in most cases there are some cultural aspects that may be inexistent in the other. Some examples of these are 'inxwala, umthontiso, izanuse, izangoma, umbuyiso' and others that are
practised by the Ndebele. Because of this, the translation work could not avoid using the Ndebele word again. The other challenge that Nyathi faced was losing the impact that a given word originally has. For example in Nyathi [1 p149] he says:

‘The officiating man is the last to partake of the beer. The little beer left, isicakafana, is taken back to the holy of holies’

‘The little beer left’ does not give a satisfactory idea of what kind of beer is being referred to and where it will be left, the actual meaning of the beer being referred to is not specific. Some sayings, proverbs and idioms changed and their impact in some given sentences became weak. The unavailability of idiophones in the English language also challenged Nyathi especially when translating the praise poetry of some kings. One example is on Nyathi [1 p36] where the translation:

*Phumasikubone*  
*Nyoniyelizwe*  
*Eha,yiya!*

Has been given as:

Come out nation bird  
That we may see you!

The translation leaves out the ‘*Eha, yiya*’ because it does not exist in the English language. The reason for the problems encountered by Nyathi [1] is explained by Bassnet [7 p.31] who wrote that “Linguistic untranslatability is due to differences in the source language and translated language, whereas cultural untranslatability is due to the absence in the translated language culture of a relevant situation feature for the source language text”.

For the above reasons Nyathi came up with some translation procedures to counter the problems of untranslatability that he encountered.

**Nyathi’s Solutions to problems of Cultural Untranslatability**

Despite the challenges that Nyathi [1] encountered in writing the Ndebele culturally bound words in English, he managed to overcome these challenges and used some translation procedures that will be discussed in this section to the benefit of the targeted readers who are either familiar to the Ndebele culture or unfamiliar to it. By so doing, the researcher will be meeting the demands of the second and third objectives of the study which are to assess the translation techniques that Nyathi employed to translate culture bound words from Ndebele to English, and to provide solutions to the problems encountered. The procedure that he used helped him to close the gap between the two languages (Ndebele and English) and create a rapport between the two and communication is enhanced.

First and foremost, Nyathi overcame the challenges he encountered by admitting that there is some degree of untranslatability in some cases of the translation process. If he had not accepted this fact he would not have managed to render information from Ndebele to English in cases where there is untranslatability. This is in line with Bassnet’s [7 p22] assertion that “the translator must accept the untranslatability of the source language phrase in the translated language on the linguistic level”. This explains the first strategy taken up by Nyathi [1] in his work. Nyathi [1] uses the transliteration strategy where a “translator transcribes the source language characters or sounds into the target language”, this is according to Bayar [19 p67]. What is implied is that this procedure refers to the conversion of foreign letters into the letters of the target language. This operation usually concerns proper names that do not have equivalents in the target language. Nyathi [1] resorts to using an English term that is closely in meaning to the one he is translating. For example, in referring to *’insipho’* [p143], Nyathi uses the word residue; yet residue refers to any left-over material after the liquid has been drained from it. There was need to refer to the beer making process from where the ‘insipho’ remains. For ‘*ukumekeza*’ [p111], Nyathi refers to it as the bridal dance yet any girl present at the wedding even if they are not the bridesmaids can be said that ‘*bayamekeza*’. Nyathi [1] examined the English culture and realised that the closely related dance to *’ukumekeza’* is the bridal dance. ‘*Umthanyelo*’ [p116] which is the girl who accompanies the bride to her new home after the wedding so that she keeps her company while adjusting to the new home is translated to be the maid which is not true in the actual sense. Here Nyathi [1] looked at the duties of this accompanying girl and likened them to that of a domestic worker. Concerning this strategy, Halliday [20 p123] asserts that “the translator observes an event in one language, the source language and performs a related event in the target language”. By so doing Nyathi [1] achieved the sense for sense translation where he managed to render or pass information from the source language Ndebele to the target language which is English. For Nyathi [1] to counter the challenges he encountered in translation he also resorts to borrowing which is a case where a word or an expression is taken from the source language and used in the target language but in a neutralised form, that is, it is made to conform to the rules of grammar or punctuation of the target language.

Nyathi [1 p29] writes “there were spiritual elements of *inxwala* which were secretive” In page 37 he writes “the *izinyanga* got involved a long time before the day of *iNxwala*. They collected various items needed for *inkatha*” In page 46 he writes “fire was made by rubbing
umklampunzi and ibozane sticks together”. In page 130 he writes “each takes a bite of inkubalo, spits to the ground”. In page 25, he writes “the umthontiso would also have been held”. The italicised words are Ndebele words and they have been used and placed within the English translated sentence fitting perfectly in the text sentence following the English sentence-construction rules. When the sentence is read out, it makes a lot of sense despite it having an Ndebele word in it because it is grammatically correct. Aitchison [21 p 119] asserts that “the borrowing language makes very small adjustments to the structure of its language”. In the examples above, there were no adjustments in the English language.

Borrowing in translation is not always justified by lexical gap in the target language but it can mainly be used as a way to preserve the local colour of the word or be used out of fear from losing some of the semiotic aspects of cultural heritage of the word if it is translated. This kind of attitude is clearly demonstrated by Nyathi especially in the title of his book which reads “Traditional Ceremonies of AmaNdebele” which could equally read as “Traditional Ceremonies of the Ndebele”. The AmaNdebele aspect is left in its source language Ndebele so as to retain the colour of originality within this group of people. Transposition is another translation procedure that Nyathi resorted to when faced with the problem of untranslatability. Transposition reflects the grammatical changes that occur in translation from source language to target language. The grammatical changes can be in the form of a situation where a word changes its form and position when the target language does not have the equal grammatical structure of the source language. Transposition offers the translator a plenty of possible versions of writing in the target language, for example, the source language verb can be shifted into a target language empty verb plus noun, the source language adverbial phrase becomes an adverb and so on. Language form like idioms and proverbs were translated by Nyathi [1] to a very simple form that only gives the sense to sense meaning of the text. Language form and structure were ignored. The praise poetry in [p27]:

Umubi kwabakayihlo
Inkosi le ngumathand’ ezizweni!
Inkosi ilolaka
Hayi le kwabakayihlo!

Were re-written in simple English in the following manner:

You are bad to your kin
The king likes foreigners
The king is cheeky
The king haunts his kin

In the translated text there is evidence of loss in the language form, the element of song no longer exists. This tactic used by Nyathi [1] concurs with Duff [12 p.10] who says difference in language structure often requires changes in the form and order of words. The form and order of words becomes less important and the author gets concerned with passing the message from the source to the target language. Nyathi [1] uses the adaptation procedure in his translation work. Here the translator works on changing the context and the form of the source text in a way that conforms to the rules of the language community, the translator resorts to rewriting the source language text according to the characters of the target language text. Bayar [19 p68] argues that adaptation is based on the tree main procedures which are cultural substitution, paraphrasing and omission. In Chapter 8 entitled Military Rites, Nyathi [1] used the English international terms related to the subject like military revolution, troops, heroic, battlefield, political, pass-out-parade and other terms related to the military to describe what happens in the Ndebele army.

Nyathi in most cases explains in a short phrase, a term from Ndebele that he could not find an equivalent for. For example the term ‘umbuyiso’ [133] was explained as “the bringing home ceremony” because bringing on its own does not fully explains that this is a cultural practice that is carried along. The cultural practise does not exist in the English culture, hence the lack of a word to stand in for it. Other words that Nyathi resorts to giving a short phrase to explain immediately after giving the Ndebele word include:

. **Idundu** (page 126) which he explained as a strip cut from the husband’s loin cloth
. **Ukungenwa** (page 141) which is explained as “have one of her deceased husband’s young brothers marry her”
. **Ichole** (page 125) which is explained as “the chief wife’s hair turf.

Such a procedure as used by Nyathi is encouraged by De-Baeaugrande [22 p20] who says ‘the translator needs not just translate idiomatic expression but also to interpret their meaning in terms of their culture.’ What is implied is that simply giving a word without explaining and referring to the particular culture is not enough because the target audience will not grasp what is translated if the aspect does not exist in their culture. Additions which are part of the text which can be placed in either square or round brackets are procedure that was used by Nyathi. These are usually used to give further explanation or source language equivalent. Examples of these that were used by Nyathi [1] are:

. In page 117; Separation and purification rites (**ukucolwa** and **ukuphehlelwa isithundu**)
. In page 121; **Idanga** (fat covering the skin)
. In page 131; **ukuchitha imphala** (the distribution of the deceased’s person’s estate).

There are many of such examples as used by the author.
This is done because by merely giving the English equivalent, the cultural aspect loses its essence and value that it deserves. There is need to also explain the cultural term under focus. Duff [12 p11] advises that if the expression cannot be directly translated, as a translator, strive to retain the original expression with a literal explanation in brackets. Other types of additions may be at the bottom of a page or at the end of a chapter or written as glosses at the end of the text book. Nyathi uses a glossary of all the Ndebele words that he used at the end of the text book from page 154 up to 161, the meanings of all the Ndebele words were given in English. Throughout the text which is basically in English the author uses a different print, that is, italics every time he uses an Ndebele word to acknowledge what he has done.

Nyathi’s use of borrowing, adaptation, transposition, transliteration and additions enhanced the readability of the target language text in a way that helps receptors comprehend the source text ideas, images, metaphors and culture through their own language and culture. Resorting to many strategies to counter the problem of untranslatability places Nyathi at an advantage because if one strategy fails it does not mean that the whole book has failed, if the reader does not understand one strategy then he can rely on the others that have been used. All the attempts by Nyathi [1] to successfully translate the text fully go hand in hand with the Skopo’s theory that indicates that the source language is an offer of information which the translator turns into an offer of information for the target audience. In this case the Ndebele language offered information, which Nyathi had to pass on to the target audience in another language, which is not Ndebele but English. The function of the translation is dependent on the knowledge, expectations, values and norms of the target readers and that is why Nyathi performs a related event in the English language to create a clear picture of what happens in the Ndebele culture.

Nyathi’s Successes

Nyathi was successful in showcasing to other cultures, the Ndebele culture as this was his main objective in writing the book. Cultural practices like paying the bridal price, inxwala, umbuyiso, ukuthethela and others are not practised in the English culture. By writing about them in the English language the author was able to make the Ndebele way of life known and thus facilitating for its appreciation by other cultures who might not have known it before. Nyathi also helped some people who are in the Ndebele culture who have since lost contact with their culture because of various factors in their lives. The young generation that no-longer practises some cultural ceremonies is left at an advantage because Nyathi [1] has given them some knowledge that they deserve to know about their culture in a language that they understand better these days which is English.

A cultural heritage for the Ndebele people has been created through this documentation. The Ndebele culture shall be well preserved in the book even if he passes on from this world. He wrote the book in English but still maintained the Ndebele names and gave their explanations. The Ndebele culture will not be extinct because it is now kept in books that can be accessible to anyone. However, the richness of the Ndebele language which comes in its proverbs, idioms and idiophones did not fully come out because of problems of untranslatability and in the same way the Ndebele people will feel the richness of their language has not been well represented.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Writing Ndebele cultural terms in English is a field that is very unpopular. Many authors have often avoided the field but Nyathi attempted it with great success. What brings a lot of these problems is that culture itself is not documented but lived and a translator like Nyathi will be expected to translate the actions of one group of people into another language, thus doing some form of inter-semiotic translation. This makes cultural translation a form of specialised translation. In such an instance, the translator faces a lot of challenges. This translator has a bigger task as compared to the one who has two written texts in front of him and simply has to render meaning from the source text to the target text.

Some of the challenges that Nyathi faced include failing to find an equivalent word in the target language that has a similar meaning to that in the source language, the unavailability of some cultural practices in the English culture that are there in the Ndebele culture, the destruction of word form and structure from Ndebele to English and the loss of the Ndebele language aspects like proverbs, idiophones and some expressions. All these problems met are solely because of one reason that the two languages English and Ndebele are different and are spoken by different cultural societies. This shows that such form of translation involves both kinds of untranslatability. These are linguistic untranslatability and cultural untranslatability. In order to go round this, he demonstrated a high level of positive attitude towards the Ndebele language. He showed a great liking of it so much that at times he gets so unbending that he chooses not to use an English alternative even though it will be there and choose to stick to the Ndebele one. This he also does so that the Ndebele cultural lexicon remains documented rather than have a situation where one talks of the Ndebele culture but failed to have even one word in the Ndebele language in the document, the objective of preserving the culture will be lost, the culture will be preserved but in a foreign language.

After highlighting the challenges that Nyathi met in the book, the researcher went on to explain the strategies
that were used to counter the problems met. He uses additions, borrowing, adaptation, transposition and transliteration. It is clear from observing the text that Nyathi did not purposefully design that for this challenge he shall use borrowing, for this one adaptation and for the other that strategy. He is mainly concerned with bringing out the sense of the text and that he manages to do so by using the above mentioned strategies. This shows a tendency towards functionalism, which is the major tenet of the Skopos theory. At the end of the day the author manages to bridge the gap that is there between the English and Ndebele languages. These strategies that Nyathi uses equip the public with methods that can be used to counter the problems of untranslatability. Many writers who have fears of translating cultural terms from one language to another can now attempt this because Nyathi successfully translated the Ndebele culture and wrote it in English. The public has been equipped with knowledge they can expect when translating culture bound words from Ndebele to English and solutions to these problems have been given.

Nyathi as the author of the text ‘Traditional Ceremonies of AmaNdebele’ is given a lot of credit for managing to document and preserve the Ndebele culture. The original Ndebele words have been maintained in the text and the glossary that is provided at the end of the text provides the definitions of all the Ndebele words that were used in the book and for this they shall never be forgotten. The youth of today who are so much obsessed with the English language and its culture can now have access into the Ndebele culture in a language that they value which is English. Nyathi has created a platform where the Ndebele and English cultures can be compared side by side. It becomes clear that the cultural practices like imxwala, umbuyoiso, ukuthethela, ukucolwa and others that were mentioned in this research are not practised in the English culture. There are some practices that are closely related in the way they are practised for example the structure of military sections is almost the same and moreover the two language societies celebrate the different passages of a person’s life like birth, puberty, marriage and death but they are celebrated differently. Awareness on how to handle, value and practise the Ndebele culture has been given. It is therefore recommended that the seriousness that Nyathi gives to his work be the same seriousness that has to be given when practising our culture. From his work, it becomes clear that people, their language and their culture are inseparable, this is what defines a society and it shapes both its successes and failures as a group. It therefore becomes evident that Nyathi makes the general public aware of the importance of valuing and uplifting one’s culture. This kind of good work by Nyathi cannot just be done by any Jack and Jill of the society. A person who has widely researched on the culture that he wishes to write about, should be well read in the two languages, source and target language. This description perfectly fits what Pathisa Nyathi is. His contributions into uplifting the Ndebele culture are well recognised by society and this contributes into the public readily accepting his work.

Nyathi’s work could have been improved by reducing the use of Ndebele words immediately accompanying them with the English word during the course of the book because he already has a glossary and that simply translates to being verbose. Despite it having the Ndebele words Nyathi has been successful in bringing out the Ndebele way of life both to those who are hearing of it for the first time and those who thought they knew it. Once again he is commended for the good work in the book ‘Traditional Ceremonies of AmaNdebele’.

REFERENCES


